

Pure Religion #3

Text : **James 1: 19-27 ; I Peter 1:13-19**

S#1.

S#2.

A. Our last lesson started us considering whether or not we are actually religious.

1. **Matt 7: 21-23** .. Jesus taught that some people erroneously think they are religious.
2. James teaches the same thing :
 - a. **James 1: 22** – But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.
 - b. Learning the word of God is of NO value if one does not apply it.
3. James gives three illustrations of this self-deception:
 - a. **James 1: 26-27** – If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.
 - b. There are at least three things that will make one's religion worthless :
 - 1) Having an undisciplined tongue
 - 2) Failing to care for widows and orphans (*helping the helpless* -cf- *abortion*)
 - 3) Leading an unsanctified life

S#3.

S#4.

B. Our previous lesson observed the need to care for the widows and orphans.

1. The text is very clear anyone who does not care for widows and orphans is practicing **worthless** religion .. that is to say he, she or they are not saved.
2. “Orphans and widows” is used metaphorically to refer to those who are helpless.
3. “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”
 - a. Is part of God's eternal law in both old and N.T. (Matt. 22:39 -cf- Lev. 19:18)
 - b. **Gal 5:14** .. The Apostle explained it's at the heart of man's relationship with God.
- * History records that Christians monitored the Roman dumping grounds to rescue babies and small children who were rejected by their fathers. Many today adopt children to prevent them from being aborted.
4. **I John 4: 19-21** ... We love God/Jesus because He first loved us.
 - ... Loving those created by God is prerequisite to loving God.
 - ... Loving God is prerequisite to being saved.

C. This lesson will concentrate on another aspect of true religion :

S#5.

James 1: 27 – Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

(This is God's standard, not man's.)

I. One can neither be saved without seeking personal holiness nor saved by it. S#6.

A. Salvation is given by grace through faith. S#7.

1. **Rom. 6: 23** – For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
2. **Eph. 2: 8-10** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. S#8.
3. From these verses we learn :
 - a. Salvation is given as gift and cannot be earned or merited.
 - b. Faith is a precondition to receiving salvation.
 - c. “for good works,” indicates that saved people are expected to **DO** something.
4. For example, the previous lesson explained that saved people must help the helpless.

B. No one will be saved without voluntarily actively seeking personal sanctification.

1. **Heb. 12: 14-16** Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; ¹⁶ that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. S#9.
2. Notice that Christians are commanded to **pursue** sanctification, i.e., holiness.
3. How does one “pursue” sanctification ?

Tit. 2: 11-14 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. (*self-motivated to serve*) S#10.

C. When one’s faith causes him to pursue sanctification God credits righteousness

1. **James 2: 22-23** You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God. S#11.
2. One’s pursuit of personal holiness is the act of seeking to be unstained by the world.
3. Our pursuit of holiness doesn’t make us literally righteous, righteousness is **imputed**

S#12.

D. Refusing to be unstained, to pursue sanctification, personal holiness is willful sin.

1. Everyone sins. **Rom. 3: 10** – There is none righteous, not even one.
2. **Heb. 10:26** ... To make no conscious effort not to sin is to “*willfully*” sin.

S#13.

II. Keeping unstained from the world does not require one to be isolated from it.**A. One would literally have to leave the world to avoid contact with sinners.**

I Cor. 5: 9-11 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; **S#14.**
 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler — not even to eat ..

B. Jesus wants His followers to be in among those in the world to serve Him.

1. **John 17: 15-18** I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep **S#15.**
 them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.
 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

2. Jesus separated us out from the world to tell the world about Him.

I Pet. 2: 9 – But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, **S#16.**
 (Your life must make your story credible.) a people for God’s own possession, **SO THAT** you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

3. He has instructed us to demonstrate how He wants folks to live.

Matt. 5: 14-16 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be **S#17.**
 hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.
 16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- a. Jesus wants for every Christian to be on public display
- b. He wants for our lives to be filled with deeds that glorify HIM.

C. Monasteries are not a biblical concept.

S#18.

1. They prevent people from fulfilling God’s purpose for their life.
2. They don’t work because people take their sin in with them.
 - a. Example : In a convent a priest fornicated with a nun and she became pregnant. They took the baby and made the nun sleep in a coffin from then on.
 - b. Monastery was found to have many children who died of abuse buried there.

III. There are some things that help us remain unstained by the world.**S#19.****A. A Christian must know and love the word of God.****S#20.**

1. Until we love the Lord enough to hunger for His word, we will not grow.

I Pet. 2: 2 – like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word,
so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

S#21.

2. Do not expect to grow in holiness if you don't spend time alone with God by studying and meditating upon the word.

Psa. 119: 11-14 – Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin
against You. **12** Blessed are You, O Lord; Teach me Your statutes.
13 With my lips I have told of All the ordinances of Your mouth.
14 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches.

S#22.**B. A Christian must never miss the communion and focus on what it means.****S#23.**

1. When we come to fully understand what the Lords Supper represents, we will long for a deeper fellowship with Him.
2. There are many benefits to the communion.
 - a. It reminds us of our faith and deepens it.
 - b. It stirs up within us an overwhelming sense of gratitude and awe.
 - c. It is a proclamation of our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus.
 - d. Being conscientious about taking the communion is an expression of love.
 - e. The communion renews our covenant with God. **“Blood of the covenant” Mt 26**

C. A Christians must keep regarding himself as dead to the dominion of sin.**S#24.**

1. **Rom. 6:10-11** – For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. **11** Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. **S#25.**

2. The Apostle Paul described it this way :

Gal. 2: 20 – I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. **S#26.**

3. The Christian has no business sinning because every time he sins he is saying, **“God is not.”**

- a. **Tit. 1: 16** – They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.
- b. Sin is a betrayal of the one who loves us and died to save us.

D. Flee worldliness and shut the door on sin completely.**S#27.**

1. **I Cor. 10: 12** – Let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

S#28.

2. The Apostle told the preacher : (*Don't play chicken with sin.*)

I Tim. 6: 11 – But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. **12** Fight the good fight of faith;

3. Everything affects the way you think.

- a. Music, Movies, TV, Books, U-tube, Social media
- b. The people with whom you associate.
- c. We must guard what goes in because we have no “*delete*” key.

4. **Phil 4: 8** – Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

S#29.

Cf – **Col. 3:2**

S#30.

E. We must work with dedication, pray fervently and depend on God for holiness.

- 1. “*You can do more than pray, but only after you have prayed.*” John Bunyan
- 2. Praying and working is like **a boat with two oars**. One only makes progress when he pulls on both oars together. Either one along makes the boat circle.

S#31.

F. Seek fellowship in the church and especially with those who are more spiritual.

- 1. Whose holiness in the church do you most admire ? Ask them how they grow.
- 2. Association begets assimilation. **Influence good or bad: I Cor 15:33** (bad corrupts)
- 3. How can one read the Psalms and not identify with David.

G. To be a Christian one must live in the present and fully commit to God.

S#32.

- 1. Tomorrow is the devil's day.
- 2. Definition : **Diet** .. *something that will start tomorrow.*
- 3. Don't risk falling into the “*one more time*” trap or “*I'll taper off.*”

CONCLUSION :

A. We are called to holiness. Holiness makes us look like God.

S#33.

B. II Cor. 3: 2 – You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all (cf- **2 Cor 5:20**) **men; 3** being manifested that you are a letter of Christ,

S#34.

C. Is your religion motivating you to live unstained by the world ?

S#35.

S#36. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**James 1: 19-27**

19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; **20** for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. **21** Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. **22** But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. **23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; **24** for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. **25** But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

26 If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. **27** Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

I Peter 1: 13-19

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. **14** As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, **15** but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; **16** because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; **18** knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, **19** but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.